

THE CARDON-HOLTON SITE (7NC-F-128, N14508)

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) will construct a new alignment for U.S. Route 301 in southern New Castle County, Delaware, from just south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal as far as the Maryland State Line southwest of Middletown. Prior to this construction, archaeological surveys are required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act to ensure that significant archaeological resources within the potential area of effect are identified, evaluated and treated to minimize any adverse effects upon them within the limits of construction.

The Cardon-Holton site was identified by **Hunter Research, Inc.** (HRI) during a Phase I survey conducted in 2009. A single Delaware Cultural Resource Number N14524 was assigned to the archaeological site, located on the north side of a relict stream leading to the area once known as the Black Marsh. In 2011 **Hunter Research, Inc.** returned to the site and conducted a Phase II investigation to determine the site's significance.

Historic research into this property indicated that this area was part of the Riley's Industry plantation from 1685 to 1722, after which the property was owned by William Carden (or Cardon) *circa* 1722-1760. The research points out the importance of an unnamed branch of a cart road, running nearby in a northeasterly direction from the intersection of Bunker Hill Road and Choptank Road, as a part of the early road network. This road was used for both legal and illicit trade.



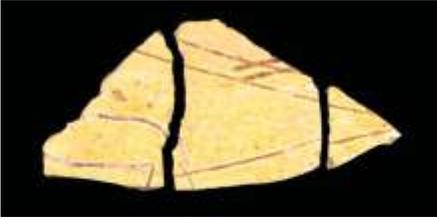
A key feature identified during the Phase I and II field investigations was a paling or plank-lined root cellar which measured 13.25 feet east-west by 5.75 feet north-south, and extended 0.3 feet below the plowzone. The shallow depth of the root cellar suggests this area has experienced some soil loss. A slot trench was present with a vertical paling plank wall along the west and north walls of the root cellar. In the northwest corner of the root cellar there was a stain measuring 1.2-feet square thought to be an architectural post determined to extend almost a foot below the floor of the cellar hole. The former post probably anchored the planked walls, which likely represent the remains of exterior walls of a larger domestic dwelling of indeterminate size.

Another key feature shown below was a shallow basin-shaped pit thought to be the former location of a smokehouse. This feature measured roughly five by six feet, and extended 1.6 feet below the plowzone. The fill of this feature exhibited a black greasy texture mixed with fish scales and fish bones, mammal bones and egg shell fragments consistent with what would be expected from a smokehouse. Hen's eggs were placed in a brine solution with meat to be smoked to determine when the salinity level had reached the saturation point, causing the egg to float. Artifacts recovered from the fill exhibit a date range of *circa* 1700 to 1775. The fill also contained pieces of burnt daub, some measuring as large as five inches across.



Left: The smokehouse pit following the removal of the plowzone, following removal of the fill. **Center:** Selected faunal remains from the smokehouse pit. Unidentified small, medium and large mammal bones and teeth, bird bones and bones and scales from fish, and egg shells. **Right:** A large piece of burnt daub from the smokehouse pit.





Three mending North Devon sgraffito decorated body sherds from a harvest jug. These sherds represent the first confirmed occurrence of North Devon sgraffito excavated from a terrestrial site in the State of Delaware! North Devon harvest jugs were produced from *circa* 1650 to 1775, but mainly date to the late 17th through early 18th century in the Tidewater Region.



A .53 caliber lead musket/pistol ball, impacted-fired.
 A brass hollow cast "French" type button.
 A clear glass hand-blown stem from a drinking vessel.
 A brownish gray spall-type gun flint with cortex present.



Selected ceramic artifacts collected from the surface.

Top row (left to right): dipped white salt-glazed stoneware, gray salt-glazed stoneware with incised, cobalt in-filled decoration, gray salt-glazed stoneware with a partial sprigged medallion with a partial "R" for Rex or Regina, Latin for king or queen, a sprig floral molded gray bodied, salt-glazed stoneware, a gray-bodied stoneware chamber pot rim/handle sherd with cobalt decoration, two dipped white salt-glazed stoneware tankard rim sherds with iron oxide.

Second row (left to right): two buff-bodied Staffordshire-type earthenware sherds with slip-combed decoration, a clouded or Whieldon ware sherd, a mottled buff-bodied earthenware Midlands-type tankard sherd.

Third row (left to right): two wheel thrown, everted, redware rim sherds with wavy slip decoration highlighted with green copper oxide, two black glazed red earthenware tankard sherds.

Bottom row: nine red earthenware plate body sherds with incised (sgraffito) decoration highlighted with copper oxide.

Artifacts recovered from the Phase I and Phase II investigations date to the late 17th and early 18th centuries likely represent items used by John, Nicholas or James Riley and/or William Cardon. Phase III "Data Recovery" will seek to gather more information about these forgotten residents of St. Georges Hundred, Delaware. Please visit the Route 301 Archaeology Blog for weekly updates. <http://blogs.deldot.gov/category/us301/archaeology-updates/>



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